



Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

Issue 23

December, 2009

H1N1 FAQ

This newsletter is published by the American Citizens Services (ACS) Unit, U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai. If there are any particular topics you are interested in, please contact ACS at: ShanghaiACS@state.gov.

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Special points of interest:

- * News: City Expats Receive Security Blanket
- * News: China Reports Big Increase In H1N1 Flu Deaths
- * Job Information for the USA Pavilion in Shanghai Expo 2010

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Where can I find information on H1N1?

For more information on travel safety and U.S. Government policy during a pandemic, please see the State Department's "Pandemic/Avian Influenza" and "Remain in Country" Fact Sheets at <http://travel.state.gov>. Further information about 2009-H1N1 Influenza, including steps you can take to stay healthy, can be found at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control website at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>, the U.S. Government Pandemic Influenza website at <http://www.flu.gov>, and the World Health Organization website at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>.

What percentage of travelers to China is quarantined?

Many travelers arrive at China's borders daily; the majority enters without difficulty. However, various factors, such as a traveler's proximity to an H1N1-infected passenger on a plane, make it impossible to predict an individual's chances of being quarantined. Furthermore, travelers with even a slightly elevated body temperature have been placed into hospital quarantine.

In preparation for the fall/winter 2009 influenza season, the Chinese State Council tasked local and provincial governments with strengthening their disease control and mitigation measures. Local and provincial policies towards 2009-H1N1 Influenza continue to evolve.

I've been quarantined in a hospital or hotel. What can the U.S. Embassy and Consulates do to help me?

Many quarantined U.S. citizens reported that the amount of food and water supplied is inadequate or that the sanitary conditions are unacceptable. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates can contact local health authorities and bring such concerns to their attention. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates can also help quarantined citizens contact family members, chaperones, or friends and assist with language translation, if necessary, during emergencies.

Can the U.S. Embassy and Consulates get me out of quarantine?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates are unable to secure the immediate release of private U.S. citizens who have been detained or quarantined in accordance with local public health and legal authorities.

Do I have to follow public health regulations?

Foreigners, including U.S. citizens, are obliged to follow local procedures and regulations regarding quarantines and other public-health measures while in China. The U.S. Government strongly suggests that U.S. citizens cooperate with local officials regarding quarantine procedures.

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Upcoming Holidays and Other Closures

Please remember that the days just before and just after a holiday are often extremely busy and you can expect significantly longer wait times. If you visit us outside of these times, you should have a shorter wait.

A full list of all of our holiday closings is available online at <http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/holidays.html>.

The American Citizen Services Unit will be **CLOSED** on the following days:

Dec.24, Thur. Afternoon

Dec.25, Fri

Christmas Eve & Day

Dec.31, Thur. Afternoon

Jan. 1, Fri

New Year's Eve & Day

Holiday Travel Tips

For those planning holiday travel, we offer a few tips to make your travel smoother:

- **Check Your Passport:** Do you have enough pages for visas and entry stamps? If your U.S. passport will expire within six months, you probably want to consider renewing your passport. Many countries in Asia, including China, require six months of validity on your passport to apply for a visa or enter the country. Remember that passports for children under 16 years old are only valid for five years. To learn how to renew your passport, visit http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/u.s.passport_renewals.html.
- **Make Your Appointment Early:** The Consulate is especially busy before and during school holidays. If you know that you will need to renew your passport or add visa pages soon, make your appointment now! Simply visit our website: <https://evisaforms.state.gov/acs/default.asp?postcode=SHG&appcode=1>.
- **Check the Visa Requirements for Your Destination:** Check our Country Specific Information Sheets to learn the Entry and Exit Requirements for your destination. These information sheets are available online at http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html.
- **Inform Your Family of Your Travel Plans:** Tell your family members about your travel plans so that they are not surprised if they cannot reach you.



Security Situation - Travel Warnings and Alerts

Security reminder: It is prudent for you and your family to review your personal security profile and to be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Since our previous Newsletter for November 2009, the U.S. Department of State has issued new Travel Warnings for the following countries.

<u>Mauritania</u>	12/02/2009
<u>Chad</u>	11/23/2009
<u>Mali</u>	11/19/2009
<u>Sri Lanka</u>	11/19/2009
<u>Nepal</u>	11/19/2009

Travel Warnings are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.

The U.S. Department of State also has issued new Travel Alerts:

<u>India - Civil Unrest</u>	12/09/2009
<u>Philippines</u>	11/24/2009
<u>Niger</u>	11/19/2009

Travel Alerts are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions generally within a particular country or region that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. This information is available at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html.

An earlier Travel Alert for China regarding H1N1 quarantine procedures is still valid and is available at:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_4238.html.

The most up-to-date information regarding permitted and prohibited items on flights can be viewed online at <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm>.

For additional information, please visit "Americans Traveling Abroad" on the U.S. Department of State website: http://travel.state.gov/visa/americans/americans_1252.html. Students traveling abroad may wish to visit the State Department site designed for them: <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>.

To obtain up-to-date information on security conditions, please call 1-888-407-4747 (toll free in the United States), or +1-202-501-4444 if you are outside the United States.

You may also visit the Consular Affairs twitter page at <http://twitter.com/TravelGov>.

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Will I be given the option to leave on the next plane home?

To date, Chinese health authorities have not permitted quarantined travelers to depart the country until officially released from quarantine.

Am I supposed to report my quarantine to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate?

The U.S. Embassy in Beijing and the U.S. Consulates in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Shenyang keep track of U.S. citizens quarantined in China. If you, your loved one, or a member of your traveling party is quarantined, please send an email or call the American Citizen Services office in the appropriate consular district with the quarantined person's name, date of birth, passport number and date of quarantine.

U.S. Embassy in Beijing:

amcitbeijing@state.gov

(Beijing, Tianjin, Shandong, Shanxi, Hebei, Henan, Hubei, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Jiangxi, Hunan, Ningxia, Qinghai, Gansu, Xinjiang)

U.S. Consulate General in Shanghai:

shanghaiacs@state.gov

(Shanghai, Jiangsu, Anhui, Zhejiang)

U.S. Consulate General in Guangzhou:

guangzhouacs@state.gov

(Guangdong, Fujian, Guangxi, Hainan)

U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu:

consularchengdu@state.gov

(Sichuan, Chongqing, Guizhou, Tibet and Yunnan)

U.S. Consulate General in Shenyang:

shenyangacs@state.gov

(Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning)

Will the Chinese Government reimburse me for lost travel expenses? What about flight change fees? Can the U.S. Embassy help change my flights?

The Chinese Government will not compensate quarantined travelers for expenses. Travelers to China are urged to consider purchasing travel insurance to protect against losses in the event they are quarantined. Airline policies

regarding flight change fees vary; please contact your airline or tour agent to inquire about fees and to change your travel plans.

I plan to fly from one Chinese city to another. Are domestic passengers subject to temperature checks?

According to the Ministry of Health, the Chinese Government does not have a policy regarding temperature screenings for domestic flights, and on-board temperature checks have ceased. Before traveling, it is best to check with your airline or tour agent to get the latest information on H1N1 screening practices at your point of departure and destination.

QUARANTINE CONDITIONS AND PROCEDURES

Can I move to a better hotel or hospital of my own choosing?

Travelers are usually quarantined in specially designated hospitals or hotels and are generally unable to relocate.

What about home or private quarantine?

In many cases, authorities have offered residents the option of home quarantine and travelers the option of quarantine in their accommodations. If you have been told that you will be quarantined, you may wish to ask health officials if either of these options is possible.

When can I be released?

Only health authorities can determine when quarantined travelers may be released.

I've been waiting for my test results and it's taking forever. Can you help me get them faster?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates are not able to influence laboratories to prioritize U.S. citizens during the testing process.

Can I have food, books, or clothing brought into the quarantine facility?

Policies regarding outside deliveries of food and other goods vary from facility to facility.

I have special dietary needs. Will the quarantine hospital or hotel provide special food for me?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates will request accommodations of special food or medication from health officials. However, not all facilities can accommodate all dietary needs. Furthermore, some provinces do not have access to all medications used by Westerners, and in more remote areas, Western-quality medications can be especially difficult to procure.

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I'm in quarantine and can't understand Chinese. None of the staff speaks English. What do I do?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates can request that the quarantine facility provide access to English-language medical staff and interpreters. However, such access may be limited. In cases of emergency, the U.S. Embassy and Consulates can assist quarantined travelers with translation.

MINORS

My child is traveling with a school group and has been quarantined after testing positive for H1N1. Can my child be accompanied by an adult guardian? Who will be able to approve my child's course of treatment?

The U.S. Embassy and Consulates have received reports of some children being separated from their parents during quarantine because only the parent or only the child tested positive for 2009-H1N1 or exhibited symptoms. Travelers are advised that Chinese health authorities have not issued a country-wide policy on keeping family members together in quarantine, and the practice of allowing young children to remain with their parents or guardians varies by quarantine facility. In

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some hospitals, parents have been denied access to their quarantined children. In these situations, the possibility exists that Chinese medical personnel may administer medications to minors without parental permission.

The school where my child is studying has ordered foreign students confined to a certain area of campus. Is this an official government quarantine? Can they leave if they want?

Some local authorities are being exceedingly cautious and are imposing mandatory quarantine periods on all U.S. citizen travelers hosted by their institutions. Because implementation of these local policies is established by Chinese officials and host organizations and may vary by location, you should check frequently with your host institution before

departing for China.

ANTIVIRAL MEDICATIONS AND VACCINES

Some people in my group tested positive for H1N1. Should I take Tamiflu® or Relenza® as a prophylactic?

Please consult your doctor for medical advice.

Are Chinese-made H1N1 vaccines safe?

Travelers are advised that 2009-H1N1 vaccines approved by foreign regulatory bodies might be commercially available in China in the upcoming months. However, the U.S. Government has evaluated only those vaccines that are licensed by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. For a list of approved vaccines, please see the U.S. Food and Drug Administration website

at <http://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/Vaccines/ApprovedProducts/ucm181950.htm>.

Please ask your doctor for guidance on Chinese-manufactured H1N1 vaccines.

I read that the U.S. Embassy and Consulates have stocks of Tamiflu® and U.S.-manufactured H1N1 vaccine. Are you planning to vaccinate U.S. citizens in China?

Legal restrictions and a lack of sufficient resources prevent the U.S. Department of State from providing private citizens with supplies, medications, or medical treatment in the event of a pandemic. There are several medical facilities in China that may have vaccines and other medical supplies. Please see our website at http://beijing.usembassy-china.org.cn/acs_health.html for general health information and provider lists.

Tax Implications for Self-Employed Citizens Abroad

Are you self-employed? If so, the IRS has information available online about the tax treatment for your income. If you are a self-employed U.S. citizen or resident, the rules regarding payment of self-employment taxes are generally the



same whether you are living in the United States or abroad.

• **Who must pay self-employment taxes?** You must pay self-employment taxes if your net earnings from self-employment are at least \$400 USD.

• **What is taxed?** The self-employment tax is a social security and Medicare tax on net earnings from self-employment.

• **Is there any cap on the amount of self-employment taxes?** For 2009, the maximum amount of net earnings from self-employment that is subject to the social security portion of the tax is \$106,800. All net earnings are subject to the Medicare portion of the tax.

For more information about taxation of U.S. citizens and permanent residents who are self-employed, please visit the IRS website: <http://www.irs.gov/businesses/article/0,,id=211508,00.html>.

Leaving Shanghai Consular District?

If you are departing the Shanghai consular district after a long stay here and you formally registered your stay with the U.S. Consulate, please do not forget to cancel your registration when you leave. You can unregister yourself by visiting the travelregistration.state.gov site if you were previously registered through this site.

If you previously submitted a paper registration form to the U.S. consulate, you may unregister yourself by sending an email request to:

ShanghaiACS@state.gov.



News: City Expats Receive Security Blanket

Foreigners and overseas Chinese who hold a Shanghai residence card and stay in a work contract with a Shanghai employer can now enjoy the city's social security and benefits, just as their local counterparts do.

The Shanghai Human Resources and Social Security Bureau has put up a notice on its Website, stating that the policy has been in effect since October 10.

The move comes after repeated calls for expats to be eligible for medical insurance, pension and workplace-injury insurance. The new policy covers foreigners, overseas Chinese and residents of Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan who are working in the city.

"It is not compulsory," said Sun Hande, the bureau's director of the employment office for overseas workers. "Qualified people can choose to join the system or not. The new policy provides them with another choice to work under a more secure environment."

According to the notice, foreigners and overseas Chinese can receive the same compensation as Shanghai natives if they fall ill in the city, but medical bills outside China's mainland will not be

covered.

In addition, people who have been paying into the city's pension fund for a specific period of time before retirement age -- 60 for men and 55 for women -- can apply for pensions in the city when they retire. The bureau's notice, however, didn't specify how many years one must pay into the system to qualify.

Those who aren't eligible for a pension or who leave the country before retiring can claim the money back. Industry-injury insurance, too, has been expanded to include foreign workers.

"The policy shows great equality for the expats," Sun said. "They pay the same and get the same as their Shanghai-native counterparts. It should be an international routine for foreigners working in one country to enjoy the country's citizens' welfare and benefits."

According to the bureau, Shanghai has about 68,000 expatriates from foreign countries and about 25,000 residents from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan working in the city. Previously, they could be covered only by commercial insurance bought by themselves or employers, Sun said.

Since 2002, the city's social-security system has been open to overseas returnees who still have Chinese citizenship and hold a Shanghai residence card. Proposals regarding social security for expats have been hot topics at recent legislative and top government advisory-body meetings.

In 2008, social security authorities revealed the draft of this policy in a reply to a Shanghai People's Congress delegate's proposal on benefit equality. And early this year, a member of the Shanghai Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference proposed that foreigners holding residence cards be included in the social-insurance system.

Shanghai authorities submitted the policy draft to the city government last year.

"It's really a good news for me," said Akiko Liu, a Chinese-Japanese woman who works for a Shanghai magazine. "Social security has always been a problem for me since I got my Japanese passport. The passport excluded me from the city's welfare system."

((From Shanghai Daily November 23, 2009 Wu Shen))

News: China Reports Big Increase In H1N1 Flu Deaths

The Chinese mainland saw a faster increase in deaths from [pandemic 2009] A/H1N1 influenza in the past weeks, according to the Ministry of Health. A total of 74 deaths were reported in the week from 23 to 29 Nov 2009, stated a notice issued on the Ministry's website on Wednesday [2 Dec 2009]. Reported deaths in the previous 2 weeks were 28 and 51, respectively.

About 91 percent of all the flu cases reported last week were of the [pandemic] A/H1N1 strain, compared with 89.8 percent in the previous week, the notice stated. The Ministry advised the public to keep warm in the cold weather, wash hands frequently and keep rooms ventilated.

As of Mon [30 Nov 2009], more than 27 million people nationwide had been inoculated with China-made A/H1N1 vaccine, according to the Ministry. Four deaths had been reported after vaccination, and 3 had been confirmed as unrelated to the vaccine, while the cause of the other is not yet clear, the Ministry said.

((From China daily, Xinhua Press Agency December 2, 2009))

Shanghai Consulate News for Americans

U.S. Consulate General,
Shanghai, China
1038 West Nanjing
Road, Westgate Mall, 8th
Floor

Tel: (86-21) 3217-4650

Fax: (86-21) 6217-2071

After Hours
Emergencies:

(86-21) 6433-3936

Open 8:00am - 11:30am
and 1:30pm - 3:30pm
Monday to Friday.

*Closed on Tuesday
afternoons, weekends
and holidays.

[http://shanghai.usemba
ssy-china.org.cn/](http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/)

Someone Asked the Consul:

I would like to take part in the USA Pavilion at the Shanghai World Expo 2010. How can I find out more about job opportunities for U.S. citizens at the USA Pavilion?

Individuals interested in working at the USA Pavilion should frequently check the official USA Pavilion website for updated listings of job opportunities and information about the application process: <http://www.usapavilion2010.com/jobs.htm>.

Part-Time And Volunteer Work

If you are interested in working part-time or as a volunteer at the USA Pavilion, you can send your resume and cover letter to usapavilionrecruitment@ivgroup.org.

Please do not send your resume to the U.S. Consulate.

Electronic Applications Now Required

Starting February 15, 2010, the Shanghai ACS Section will require the use of electronic application forms for all passport services, including passport renewals and adding visa pages (Forms DS-11, DS-82, DS-5504 and DS-4085). After completing your application online, print your application and bring it to your appointment.

Failure to complete these applications online will delay the processing of your application.

You can access the required forms at the ACS website http://shanghai.usembassy-china.org.cn/passport_forms.html or http://travel.state.gov/passport/forms/forms_847.html.

Note: For applicants without social security numbers (ex: newborn babies), enter 000-00-0000 as the SSN on the online form.

If your passport is lost or stolen, you can print out a Statement Regarding Lost or

Stolen Passport (DS-64). And if you are applying for a minor's passport and both parents cannot sign the application together, you can print out a Statement of Consent (DS-3053). These special forms do not need to be filled out online.

